



The purpose of this segment of the call was to talk about systemic issues that arise in relation to housing and capability of vulnerable adults and to share solutions. This paper is a composite of information from the discussion and the introductory materials.

Issues Identified by CRN Members

Rationing of Home Support

- **Issue:** Health Authorities throughout the province are rationing home support hours which range from 1 hour to a maximum of 4 hours per day based on care needs as assessed by case managers
- **Impacts** of the policy:
 - Home support workers are frustrated by their lack of capacity to adequately provide the care their clients need within the allotted timeframes
 - Travel time is included in the allotment resulting in an additional loss of service to clients
 - Allotments vary from region to region and client to client depending on who does the assessment
 - Lack of time to provide sufficient quality or quantity of care creates the preconditions for systemic abuse
 - Some clients are forced to move into residential facilities sooner than might otherwise have been the case

Younger Adults Placed in Inappropriate Facility Care / Special Needs Housing

- **Issue:** Lack of appropriate housing options for younger adults requiring residential care or adults whose needs are beyond the traditional mandate of residential care
- **Impacts:**
 - There is a growing population of homeless adults
 - Younger adults or special needs residents housed in residential facilities do not have access to programs and/or services tailored to their needs because the emphasis is on meeting the needs of the larger population of frail, older adults
 - Older adults in residential facilities are potentially at risk due to inappropriate behaviours of the younger cohort, e.g. sexual overtures

Abuse & Neglect in Acute and Long Term Care Facilities

- **Issue:** The difficulties that CRNs experience in dealing with abuse and neglect complaints about the care in acute and long term care facilities
- **Impacts:**
 - Very difficult to deal with (especially in smaller communities) because preserving relationships between CRN members and facility staff is essential to working together and implementing constructive solutions
 - Reporting engenders the possibility of reprisals against the vulnerable adult
 - Question about whether a shift away from an individual “professional accountability” model to a “system-wide risk management” model is creating more potential risks for residents than it is solving
 - Studies document that some system-wide solutions, e.g. zero-tolerance and reporting policies, have the unintended effect of driving the issues underground
 - In systemic abuse most abusers do not set out “with the intent” to abuse and that makes it more challenging to address the impacts

Arbitrary Rules in Publicly Funded Housing

- **Issue:** Individual operators may enforce arbitrary or unreasonable rules
- **Impacts:**
 - In one community, a society operating several (12?) buildings has fostered a culture of “Do what you’re told, or you’re out”
 - Because the available stock is very limited, eventually the client runs out of options and has no choice but to comply or find themselves homeless

Community Solutions

The various communities participating in the call are all working towards solutions to these issues. Here are some of the creative activities that are occurring around BC:

Facilitating Dialogue amongst Community Agencies

One of the issues in communities is bringing together all of the agencies and organisations who own a piece of the solution. Several communities have done projects to address this issue:

- Penticton
 - The CRN put together a housing coalition comprised of members from the various stakeholders
 - They started by facilitating 3 meetings / dialogues and this led to committees being formed to look at specific issues which in turn led to formation of special committees or teams to address the issues
- North Shore
 - The CRN sponsored two dialogues about abuse and neglect in care facilities at the request of Lionsview Seniors Planning (a seniors advocacy group)
 - The first dialogue led to a second dialogue that looked at the issue through two lenses:
 - A research presentation by Charmaine Spencer which looked at the big picture (systemic issues)
 - A panel discussion involving a resident of a group home, a family member whose parent lives in an intermediate care facility and a support worker who has worked in both a residential care setting and a home support setting
 - The dialogues led to 3 solutions-oriented follow-up projects
- Nelson
 - The Committee on Homelessness is a group of people including community services workers, clergy, citizens, advocates, HIV/AIDS and Hep C support workers, municipal government personnel, food security workers, Youth Centre employees etc.
 - They meet to discuss the many issues of homelessness in the community including, but not restricted to:
 - People who are not counted as being homeless because they are “couch surfing”
 - Access (or lack of access) to services when someone has no address
 - Red tape interfering with initiatives that may actually address some of the problems
 - Education of the general population regarding homelessness
 - The group worked to sponsor a research project on the issues of homelessness in Nelson, which will be completed in March of 2009

Supportive Housing

- Revelstoke
 - New model is being tried by BC Housing in Revelstoke to better support “hard to house” adults in a subsidized housing project

- The solution includes hiring a Tenant Support Worker with appropriate knowledge, skills and abilities to support these at risk adults; rather than relying on a resident manager or maintenance worker to provide supports
 - Special Needs Housing
 - There is a group of people working with the City and service providers to offer services for residential facilities – both store front and outreach services
- Salmo
 - There is only one housing option geared to seniors and this has historically meant that if someone did not meet the criteria of the facility, they would have to move away from their home community in order to get appropriate housing
 - CRN members were involved in discussions which led to changes being made to the facility's policies, allowing a greater number of people to continue living in their community but with the safe and accessible housing they required
- Kaslo
 - A large community forum, with guests from the Interior Health Authority, was sponsored by the local Housing Committee to have a community-wide discussion on housing issues
 - Kaslo had no care beds whatsoever and people would end up “living” at the local hospital if they or their family insisted that they remain in the community
 - As a result of the forum and the continuing work of the committee, part of the hospital was turned into a much more appropriate and usable living area and the guidelines and policies at the local seniors housing complex were changed to accommodate current realities
- North Shore
 - This project came about because of two projects - the CRN-sponsored care facility dialogues and the Seniors in Communities (Mapping) Project sponsored by the Seniors Coalition. Housing was one of several large areas of interest along with services, transportation, advocacy and ongoing research
 - The housing project team is completing a proposal for the District of North Vancouver for some amenity space options that will be a part of a building model for an affordable seniors housing development in one of the District's town sites
 - The team is looking at other concrete solutions to the housing issue on the North Shore

Information for Residents and Building Managers

- Revelstoke
 - The CRN did a project to inform residents about abuse, neglect and self-neglect and they also provided the building manager with the BCCEAS resources called “Tips of the Trade for Building Managers”. The latter is a series of 10 fact sheets covering topics like hearing and vision loss, alcohol issues, elder abuse, memory impairment, “pack rat” or hoarding behaviour, death and dying, ... (email: ceas@telus.net or phone (604) 437-1940)

Housing Younger Adults with Mental Health and/or Concurrent Diagnoses

- North Shore
 - One of the follow-up projects to a dialogue on the Community Role in Safe & Supportive Housing is a collaborative project with the Health Authority's Older Adult Mental Health Team, a North Shore residential care facility (Director of Care and a representative of the company that owns the facility) and the CRN
 - The project purpose is to create a proposal to safely house younger adults with mental and/or substance abuse issues in the larger footprint of an intermediate care facility

Public Information / Support

- Quesnel
 - CBC North ran a series on FASD that was extremely effective in raising public awareness of the issues and potential solutions
 - The suggestion is that we might interest the CBC or another media outlet in doing a series around abuse and neglect in a housing context
- BCACRN
 - Alison recently had the opportunity to talk to Kim Carter, the BC Ombudsman, about the “Systemic Investigation into Seniors Care”
 - The Association is requesting a meeting to:
 - Share strategies that individual CRNs are employing around the province to move the issues forward in a constructive way
 - Provide a document with recommendations / solutions that illustrates the role of CRNs
 - Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
 - Mary Polak announced the strengthening of the regulations in the Community Care & Assisted Living Act on Friday, March 20th. The changes will go into effect on October 1, 2009 http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2005-2009/2009HLS0025-000449.htm
 - Minister Polak is also very interested in improving home support services so this seems an opportune time to provide information and support for changes in these areas that will benefit vulnerable adults
- North Shore
 - The Home Support / Residential Care Facility Project involves research and focus groups to gather information about what citizens need to know when they reach the stage of having to acquire home support services or place their loved one in care
 - It is currently in the design stage and will eventually be implemented as a web-based decision-making model